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WHISTLER

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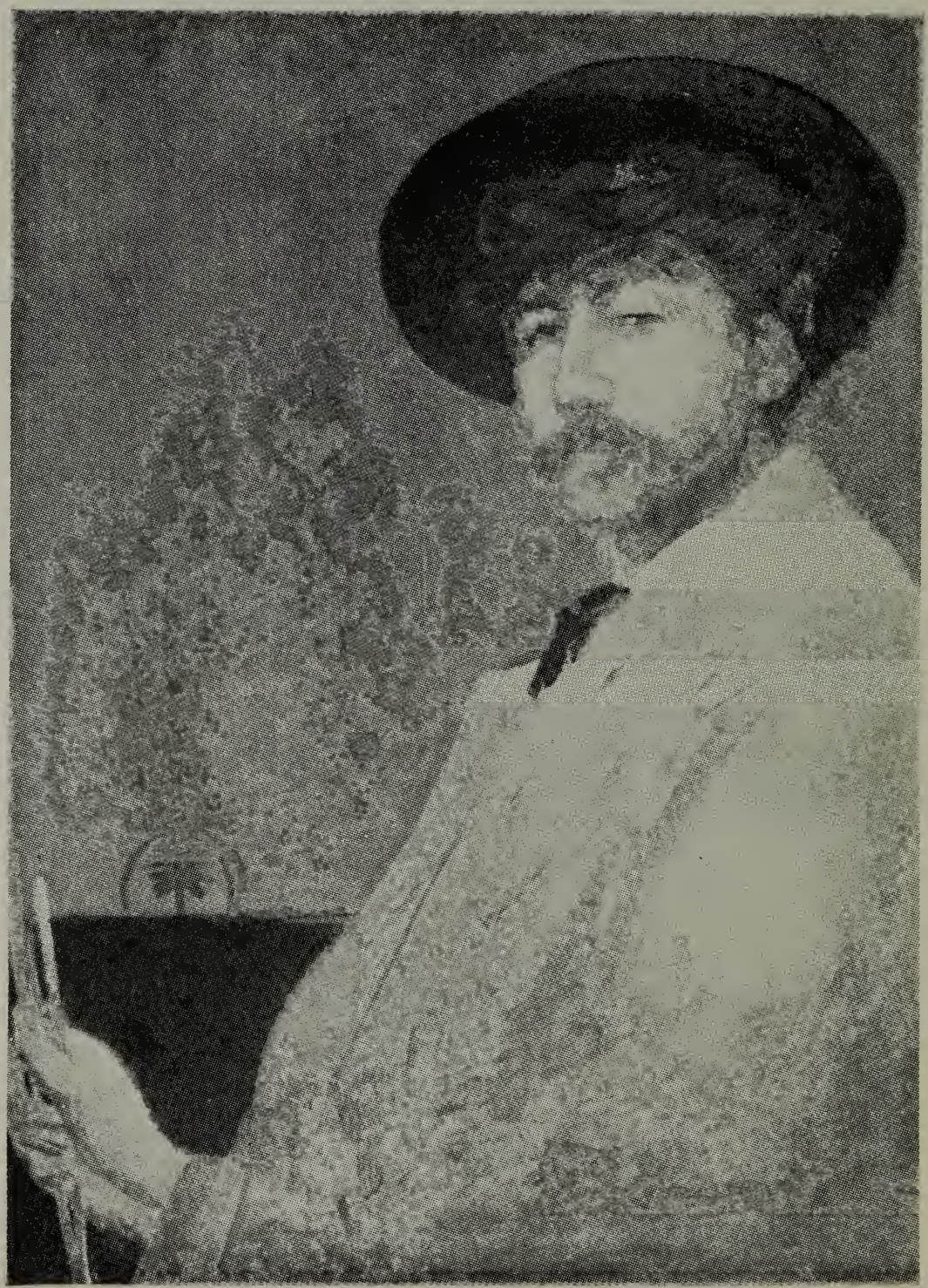
JAMES McNEILL WHISTLER

Bell's Miniature Series of Painters.

Edited by G. C. WILLIAMSON, Litt.D.

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PORTRAIT OF JAMES McNEILL WHISTLER.

BY HIMSELF.

Bell's Miniature Series of Painters

JAMES McNEILL

WHISTLER

BY

MRS. ARTHUR BELL



LONDON
GEORGE BELL & SONS
1908

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THE LIFE

OF

JAMES McNEILL WHISTLER

THERE was, perhaps, no single figure in the modern art world that stood out from amongst its fellows with more lurid distinctness than did that of James McNeill Whistler during the last twenty years of his long career. From the first public opinion was always greatly divided on the subject of his work. To some he appeared a genius of the first rank: a masterly interpreter of nature, to whom she had revealed some of her most jealously guarded secrets; a magician able to evoke beauty out of chaos, and to lend charm to the mere shadow of a theme. Others, now quite in the minority, looked upon the American artist as a mere trifler; they were shocked at his elimination of subject; they could see nothing to admire in his tone harmonies, and considered the butterfly he adopted as his symbol peculiarly

appropriate, in view of the ephemeral character of his creations.

Those, however, who attempted to give practical expression to their dislike by breaking the "butterfly" on the wheel of hostile criticism, found in it an unexpected resisting force, rendering futile every effort to crush it. It arose phoenix-like in fresh vigour from every attack, and combined with its ethereal beauty a sting as piercing as that of a wasp. Whistler wielded the pen with a virile force equal to that of his brush; he was an expert in the art of self-defence, to which he gave the characteristic name of the "Gentle Art of Making Enemies," and he succeeded in converting to his own point of view many of those who were most bitter against him, whilst he silenced the little remnant, who, though still unconvinced, shrank from incurring his withering contempt.

James McNeill Whistler was the son of Major George Washington Whistler, whose father, a well-born Irish gentleman, emigrated to America in the early part of the nineteenth century. The wife of Major Whistler belonged to an aristocratic family of Baltimore, and her ancestors were amongst the first settlers in the Southern States of the Union. The future master had, therefore,

the advantage of being brought up in refined surroundings, and from the first there seems to have been a deep sympathy between him and his mother. From her he may have inherited the delicate sensitiveness which is one of the most marked peculiarities of his style, whilst to his father he probably owed the sturdy independence of character that enabled him to triumph over all the difficulties that beset the path of an innovator.

Born in 1834 at Lowell, in Massachusetts, James Whistler was taken when still a child to St. Petersburg, where his father held for a short time an appointment under the Russian Government, and he remained there until the Major's death in 1849. He then returned to America with his widowed mother, and later entered the West Point Academy, with a view to following the military profession, but he had no real taste for it, and after four years of somewhat unprofitable study, he decided to become an artist. He went to Paris, then still the one place in which true art training could be obtained, and entered the studio of Marc Gleyre, an historical painter of some note, whose prosaic style was not, however, in the least calculated to appeal to the sympathies of the gifted young American. In

spite of this incongruity, Whistler remained for two years with Gleyre, though he probably learnt less from his nominal master than he did from such men as Degas, Fantin-Latour, and other exponents of impressionism and naturalism with whom he was brought in contact.

Already in his student years Whistler began to work in the medium of etching, in which he was later to obtain so great a mastery. His earliest etchings are said to have been a series of maps for the United States Coast Survey, but as only one of them was published, it is difficult to tell whether they gave any promise of his future skill with the needle. In 1858 appeared the so-called "Little French set," executed partly in Paris and partly in the then French provinces of Alsace and Lorraine, all of which were felicitous renderings of simple scenes, such as *The Cabaret* and *The unsafe Tenement*, which, though they attracted but scant notice at the time, are now eagerly sought after by collectors. In 1859 Whistler sent to the Salon some paintings in oil, which were rejected, and, strange to say, the same fate befell, four years later, his first important picture, *The White Girl*, now so celebrated; which when exhibited in the "Salon des Refusés" aroused the greatest enthusiasm amongst those most

competent to judge. Indeed, they compared the young American with another reformer, Edouard Manet, who, though he was later recognized as the true founder of the French Impressionist School, was at that time undergoing something amounting to persecution from the official art world.

Not long after the exhibition of *The White Girl* the American artist came to London, and after living for some little time in Sloane Street with his brother-in-law, Sir Seymour Haden, and later sharing a studio with George Du Maurier in Newman Street, he took up his abode in Chelsea. There he at once became deeply enamoured of the beauty of the Thames, and soon made its peculiar effects so entirely his own that he may well be called the "Poet of the River." He was indeed one of the few modern artists who have been able truly to interpret in all its varying moods, the spirit of the sombre stream, with its gloomy stretches of gray water, its laden barges, its confusion of masts and cordage, its tragic survivals of a grandeur long since decayed, and its modern wharves and warehouses, emerging phantom-like from the rarely absent shroud of mist or fog. Later on Whistler rather resented any intrusion on a district which he soon began to

look upon as his own special domain, and considered the very lanes and alleys in Chelsea his private property; so much so that on one occasion when he found another artist making a sketch in a side street, he sternly ordered him to begone.

Two of the famous Thames series of etchings were exhibited at the Academy in 1859, although they were not published until long afterwards, and in 1860 the celebrated painting *At the Piano* was well hung, finding a purchaser in John Philip, R.A., and at the same exhibition were seen a drypoint Portrait, with three etchings, namely, *The Black Lion Wharf*, *The Lime Burner*, and *The Thames from the Tunnel Pier*. In 1861 the beautiful painting of *La Mère Gerard*, now the property of Mr. A. C. Swinburne, a drypoint Portrait of M. Oxenfeld, and an etching of the Thames near Limehouse, well sustained the now established reputation of the young American, and were succeeded in the next three years by a large number of characteristic works, chiefly etchings. In 1865 Whistler went to Valparaiso, where he painted several fine sea pieces, and on his return to London in 1866 he settled down to steady work in Chelsea, painting, among other well-known pictures, a Portrait of himself as a

young man, now in the possession of Mr. George McCulloch. *The Golden Screen*, *Old Battersea Bridge*, and *The Scarf* were exhibited at the Academy with *The Little White Girl* in 1865, and in 1867 appeared the beautiful *Symphony in White, No. 3*, considered one of the artist's masterpieces, and *Sea and Rain*, a very remarkable atmospheric effect.

Not until 1870 did Whistler again exhibit at the Academy, but his one picture, *The Balcony*, well sustained his already great reputation as an original interpreter of original themes, and in 1872 appeared the beautiful Portrait of his Mother, which, though it narrowly escaped rejection, has long been recognized as one of its author's masterpieces. Other works produced between 1865 and 1874 were the *Princesse du Pays de la Porcelaine* and the *Lange Leizen*, in both of which, as in *The Little White Girl* and *The Balcony*, the influence of the Japanese is very distinctly noticeable.

After the appearance at the Royal Academy of the Portrait of his Mother, Whistler exhibited nothing there until 1879, when he sent one of his etchings, *Old Pulney Bridge*. From that time until his death he received no official recognition in England, although with prophetic

insight, the authorities of the British Museum made a point of collecting all his etchings, securing for the nation a unique series of examples of the work of one of the recognized masters of the needle.

It was in 1874 that the American master held, in Pall Mall, the first of a series of exhibitions of his own work, in which appeared with the Portrait of his Mother and that of Miss Alexander as a child of fifteen, considered one of his best paintings, the equally celebrated *Thomas Carlyle*, and the likenesses of Mr. and Mrs. Leyland, for whom later he decorated the famous Peacock Room at 49, Princes Gate. When in 1877 Sir Coutts Lindsay founded the Grosvenor Gallery, Whistler became one of the chief and most constant contributors to the annual Exhibitions, at the first of which were seen several of the so-called *Nocturnes* and *Symphonies*, that have evoked so great a variety of criticism, with *The Portrait of Henry Irving as Philip II.*, which had its share in rousing the bitter ire of Ruskin, then at the zenith of his fame as an art critic. In his own special organ, "Fors Clavigera," the great master of literary style, made a most undignified attack upon the owner of the Gallery and the American painter, declaring that "for Mr. Whist-



Goupil & Co., photo.] [*Luxembourg, Paris.*

PORTRAIT OF THE PAINTER'S MOTHER.

ler's own sake no less than for the protection of the purchaser, Sir Coutts Lindsay ought not to have admitted works . . . in which the ill-educated conceit of the artist so nearly approached the aspect of wilful imposture," with much more in a similar strain. "I have seen and heard much of Cockney impudence before now," added Ruskin, "but never expected to hear a coxcomb ask two hundred guineas for flinging a pot of paint in the public's face."

For what he was certainly justified in looking upon as an insult to himself and to his work, Whistler brought an action for libel against the celebrated critic, claiming £1,000 damages. The trial which ensued, roused an extraordinary amount of interest, not only on account of the eminence of the two men pitted against each other, but because it brought out very forcibly the unsatisfactory state of art criticism in England, and the absurdity of expecting men who knew nothing whatever of painting, to pronounce judgement on points which would have puzzled experts. The strange trial in the Court of the Exchequer before Baron Huddleston lasted a couple of days, and had not proceeded far before it degenerated into a mere struggle of wit between the plaintiff and the Attorney-General, the latter

treating Whistler as if he were the defendant instead of the plaintiff. Several of the most eminent artists of the day were summoned as witnesses, and the extraordinary variety of their opinions only served to confuse yet more the minds of the eager listeners to the views expressed.

In vain did the plaintiff urge that the opinions so forcibly expressed as to the merits, or rather the demerits of his work, could not really affect the point at issue. He failed to convince his hearers, and although the verdict was nominally in his favour, the granting of one farthing damages only, was an unmistakeable expression of the Court's hostility. A subscription was at once set on foot to pay the legal expenses incurred by Ruskin, to which the plaintiff is said to have contributed a farthing. The actual coin received he was in the habit of wearing on his watch-chain, looking upon it as a trophy of victory. So ended a trial which the Attorney-General, who defended Ruskin, called "the greatest fun the English had ever had in a Court of law," a remark which showed a strange want of appreciation of the contempt into which such a farce must necessarily have brought the administration of justice in England.

Fortunately, however, neither the "fun," nor the comments on the "fun" were followed by the suppression of the victim, for the publicity of the trial acted as a very effective advertisement, the ridiculed *Nocturnes* and *Symphonies* even became, to a certain extent, popular, and at the present day he is indeed a bold man who still dares to question their merits, for in the words of a critic in the "Studio," written shortly before the death of the master, "Whistler has become an axiom."

The various pamphlets and essays with which Whistler revenged himself on Ruskin for his plain speaking have become almost as famous as the paintings that the latter endeavoured to hold up to contempt. The "Whistler *versus* Ruskin—Art and Art Critics," dedicated to Albert Moore, who had been a witness for the artist at the trial, completely turned the tables upon those who had appeared against him, and to his already established reputation as a leader in art Whistler now added that of a forcible and eloquent writer. When in 1879 he left England for Venice, he was perhaps one of the most talked about of living artists, and on his return to London in 1880, bringing with him many etchings, pastels and paintings executed in the lagoon city, he was

eagerly welcomed by his many admirers. In 1880 an exhibition of the Venetian etchings, and in 1881 one of the pastels, was held in the Fine Art Society's Galleries, succeeded in the following years by several important shows of etchings and drypoints, nocturnes and other paintings in the Dowdeswell Galleries, whilst at the Grosvenor Gallery appeared many beautiful and successful portraits, including those of Miss Rosa Corder, Lady Meux, and Lady Archibald Campbell.

It seems to have been about 1878 that Whistler first began to work in lithography, his attention having been called to its possibilities by Mr. Thomas Way perhaps the most able of living lithographic printers. With characteristic enthusiasm the painter-etcher soon mastered the technicalities of the new medium, publishing several fine examples of his skill, such as *The Toilet* and *Limehouse*, which won him much appreciation from good judges.

In 1884 Whistler was elected a member of the Royal Society of British Artists, probably greatly to his own surprise, his style being totally unlike that of any other painter belonging to that most conservative body. His work, however, added so much to the popularity of the

exhibitions in Suffolk Street, that two years later he was elected President, with the result that what had hitherto been a peaceful group of artists, devoted to old traditions and adverse to any innovation, was split up into two factions; one, to which the majority belonged, bitterly hostile to Whistler's methods and ideas, the other eager to adopt them at whatever cost. In the end the older members triumphed. Whistler was compelled to resign, and the Society resumed the even tenour of its way under the leadership of Sir Wyke Bayliss. The disappointment to the would-be reformer must have been greatly softened by his election, the year of his resignation, to the Roval Munich Academy, and his now numerous friends in London manifested their sympathy with him at an entertainment in his honour, at which Mr. Underdowne, Q.C., who occupied the chair, first gave to the guest of the evening the name, that afterwards clung to him, of the "Papilio Mordens," in clever allusion to the signature of the butterfly, that is a modification of the initials J. M. W., and to the biting satire of Whistler's pen.

In 1885 were delivered to crowded audiences in London, Oxford, and Cambridge, the brilliant lectures known as the "Ten O'Clock," in which

Whistler showed himself a master in sardonic humour, and a most original critic of the masters of the past. Five years later he published the famous book "The Gentle Art of Making Enemies," consisting almost entirely of quotations from press criticisms of his work, and his answers to them, the former often, it must be confessed, a good deal garbled.

The rest of Whistler's life was one long success. In 1892 an exhibition of his oil paintings was held at the Goupil Gallery that included, with several of his finest Portraits, a large number of his characteristic "Nocturnes, Marines, and Chevalet pieces." In the early morning "Artists and poor relations," as the generous but quizzical exhibitor, called his brethren of the brush, were admitted without payment, a peculiarity immortalized by Bernard Partridge in a famous cartoon in "Punch." A memento of this remarkable show, to which hundreds daily flocked, was published in the form of a portfolio of photographs of the best paintings, each signed with the butterfly, and now of course of very considerable value. The Exhibition over, Whistler started on a tour in France, after which he lived for some time in the Rue du Bac, Paris, working hard at painting, etching, and lithography. In

1895 he was back again in his beloved Chelsea, whence he made a trip to Lyme Regis, painting there his famous *Master Smith* and *Little Rose*, and producing some of his best lithographs of interiors. At the end of the same year an exhibition of Whistler's lithographs was held in the Fine Art Society's Gallery, à propos of which an acute critic remarked that the artist had in them "thoroughly proved the well-nigh inexhaustible beauty of his material."

Although, as already stated, Whistler never received any official recognition in England, and the wish he at one time entertained of becoming a Royal Academician was ignored, many honours were bestowed upon him from abroad. He was a member of the Royal Academies of Dresden, Bavaria, and Rome, as well as of the Société Nationale des Artistes Français, an officer of the Legion of Honour, and a Chevalier of the Order of St. Michael. He had much to do with the foundation of the International Society of Sculptors, Painters, and Gravers, of which he was elected the first President in 1898, a position which was no sinecure, and which he held until his death. Late in life the distinguished master married Mrs. Godwin, the widow of a well-known architect, who was herself a proficient

with the brush, and an enthusiastic admirer of her husband's works. After her death in 1896 Whistler lived in great retirement, and he died in London on July 17, 1903, having throughout nearly half a century of unceasing activity held a place of extraordinary prominence amongst his contemporaries, the result probably as much of his intensely individual personality and his original theories as to the mission of art, as of the peculiar excellencies of his own work. He may, indeed, be said to have led the advanced guard of the new art movement, and whatever may be the final verdict on his life-work, his impress on his time will certainly have to be reckoned with by all art historians of the future.

Whistler belonged to the deeply interesting transition time, during which, out of all the conflicting elements that have struggled for the mastery in the last half century, has emerged the nucleus of the Art of the future, with its combined reverence for truth to nature and toleration of individual interpretation of that truth. As a wrestler with prejudice, a pioneer of freedom, an upholder of every artist's right to be true to his own ideals, his name will be remembered long after his hard sayings have been forgotten; and even now his life-work, too long obscured by

too near a vision, is beginning to be seen in its just perspective.

Since his death Whistler's reputation has been continually on the increase, and the prices already given for his work place him in the rank of an old master. Even before the end, his unswerving fidelity to his own ideals was recognized, and now that he is gone to his rest, even the most adverse judges realize that one and all of his works are links in a chain of unbroken continuity. Neither adverse criticism nor fulsome flattery, fluctuations of health, or even the modification of the point of view generally inseparable from advancing years, ever led the undaunted apostle of freedom, the pioneer of realistic impressionism, to falter in the path marked out by himself more than half a century ago.

THE WORK OF JAMES McNEILL WHISTLER.

I. GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS, SUBJECT PICTURES, AND LANDSCAPES

TO sum up succinctly the peculiarities of so versatile a master as Whistler is difficult; but his own words in explanation of the peculiarities of his nomenclature may well be taken as the keynote of his work in every medium. "As music," he said, "is the poetry of sound, so is painting the poetry of sight, and the subject matter has nothing to do with harmony of sound or of colour. . . . Art should be independent of all claptrap, should stand alone and appeal to the artistic sense of eye or ear without confounding this with emotions entirely foreign to it, as devotion, pity, love, patriotism, and the like. All these have no kind of concern with it, and that is why I insist on calling my works arrangements and harmonies."

That as a general rule the artist was true to this limitation of his art there can be no doubt, but it is equally obvious to all who know his best portraits, that he was, as it were in spite of himself, a most able interpreter of human emotion, his Portraits of his Mother and of Thomas Carlyle ranking, with the masterpieces of Velazquez and Rembrandt, amongst the finest interpretations of noble personalities in existence. Moreover, even in some of his early work, such as the drawings done for "Once a Week" and "Good Words"—mere pot-boilers of course, and yet full of talent—Whistler showed an appreciation for the very qualities he so emphatically declared to be outside the province of art. The figure of the starving girl, illustrative of the sufferings of the people in Lancashire during the Cotton Famine, cannot fail to awake pity, whilst a whole story is told by that of the woman awaiting the tragedy of St. Bartholomew's day.

Apart from his characteristic choice of subjects, the most noteworthy peculiarities of Whistler's style are the power of catching the fleeting expression of any face or scene depicted, the skill with which pictorial and decorative effect are combined, and the subordination of

every detail to the general scheme, combined with a subtle beauty of colouring such as has scarcely, if ever, been surpassed.

So far as his actual technique is concerned, the chief characteristics of Whistler's methods, were rapidity of handling and the habit of working on the whole of his subject at once. In painting in oils it was his custom to cover his canvas entirely in the first day's work, so that his picture was complete in itself so far as it was advanced. In fact he conceived the whole before he touched any part, much as a sculptor does before he begins to hew his marble.

The earlier paintings, inspired by the scenery of the Lower Thames, which, as already remarked, exercised so peculiar a fascination on the American master, were mostly of small size, slight in execution, and decorative in spirit, already betraying the deep sympathy with Japanese art that later became a very important factor in the development of their author's style. Amongst these *Notes*, *Harmonies*, *Symphonies*, and *Nocturnes*, as Whistler himself called them, all poetic renderings of scenes not naturally of an inspiring character, may be specially noted the *Thames in Ice*, the *Chelsea Embankment*, a Nocturne in gray and silver, the *Chelsea*



T. & R. Annan & Sons, photo.]

THE THAMES IN ICE.

Snow, and a Nocturne in gray and gold, which, beautiful and effective though they undoubtedly are, were at first received with ridicule by London critics, a fact for which their author later revenged himself by quoting their opinions as the "Voice of a People," which they certainly were not, in the catalogue of one of his exhibitions.

Typical later examples of Nocturnes and Harmonies are the *Fire-wheel* in black and gold, *Trafalgar Square in Snow*, the *Valparaiso* in flesh colour and green, the same subject in blue and gold, the *Westminster Bridge* in gray and gold, the *Bognor* in blue and silver, *Battersea Bridge* in blue and silver, *St. Mark's, Venice*, in blue and gold, and *The Falling Rocket, Cremorne*, in black and gold.

True to the principles he knew so well how to defend, Whistler continued to work on, in his own way, to give to his spirited productions the quaintly characteristic titles of which he was so greatly enamoured, and to analyze with racy humour the remarks of all who ventured to express an opinion favourable or otherwise on his style. His *Symphonies*, more remarkable even than his *Nocturnes* for their originality, consist generally of one or two portrait studies,

and amongst them may be quoted, as specially typical, the three in white. In No. 1, *The White Girl*, already referred to as having been rejected at the Paris Salon, the artist achieved his first triumph in portraiture, certain of the best judges recognizing in it his kinship with Velazquez.

The picture, now in private possession in America, represents a dark-haired maiden standing in snowy white garments against a background of white, with a single white flower in her hand, and looking out of the canvas with an expression of mute inquiry. None know who was the original of this remarkable likeness, but *The White Girl* is as well known as "La Bella" of Titian, the wearer of the "Chapeau de Poil" of Rubens, or the "Old Woman" of Rembrandt in the National Gallery, which, by the way, was painted by the great Dutch master when he was about the same age as was Whistler, when his nameless model posed for him.

The No. 2 Symphony, of considerably later date, now in the possession of Mr. Arthur Studd of London, is also a masterpiece in the truest sense of that much misused term. Simple and effective in composition, and with a greater elaboration of detail than is usual in Whistler's work, it represents a young girl all unconscious

of her beauty, standing dreaming before her mirror, in a pose of easy grace. The reflection in the glass is absolutely true, and the delicate flowers relieved against the fireplace are painted with all the decorative skill peculiar to the master.

The No. 3 Symphony, fully noted below, is not perhaps quite so charming as the No. 2, possibly because the interest is divided between the figures, each of which would have gained by the absence of the other, but it certainly does not justify the accusation brought against it, when it was first exhibited, of being eccentric in composition and vulgar in form.

Yet a fourth Symphony in white was begun by Whistler, in which three girls were introduced, wearing classic white robes and caps of vivid red, all bending over plants beneath an awning. Unfortunately the work, which promised to be as beautiful as any of its predecessors, was never finished; but for all that it is a much valued possession of its fortunate owner, Mr. Chapman of Liverpool.

Another remarkable subject painting is *La Mère Gerard*, a very strong study of an old Frenchwoman, which was painted about the same time as the even more celebrated *Music Room*, now in America, and *At the Piano*, of the

latter of which detailed particulars are given in the account of "Our Illustrations." In the former two figures are introduced in a large room, one, a lady wearing a riding habit, and the other, a little girl in white who is seated absorbed in reading. The most remarkable feature of this celebrated work is the forcible painting of the accessories, especially of the reflection in a looking-glass of a porcelain vase. Other very typical compositions in oil, in all of which the love of their author for Japanese art is very vividly reflected, are *The Balcony*, the *Princesse du Pays de la Porcelaine* and *The Golden Screen*. The *Princesse*, a full-length portrait of Miss Spartali, sold to America in 1903 for the high price of £5,000, was first hung in the famous Peacock Room of Mr. Leyland. It is full of delicate refinement, graceful and dignified in pose, brilliant yet harmonious in colour, a thorough realization alike of the highest possibilities and the limitations of decorative art.

The Golden Screen, now in the possession of Lord Battersea, is a brilliant *capriccio* in purple and gold, representing a lady in Japanese robes seated on the floor, with the screen giving its name to the picture, behind her. Amongst minor paintings and sketches in oil may be named the



[*By permission of Mr. Edmund Davis.*

AT THE PIANO.

Little Sweet Stuff Shop, a note in gray; the *Old Chelsea Church*, a harmony in brown and gold; the *Rag Shop, Chelsea*, in black and gold; *Carmen qui rit* in violet and rose; *La Cigale* in rose and brown; the *Little Lady Sophie of Soho* in green and violet; the *Curé's Little Class*, *Honfleur*; and the *Evening Walk*, *Dieppe*, which, with his more important works, have helped to place the artist in the very first rank amongst impressionist workers in oil, and to justify to some extent the assertion of a modern writer that "no one has made such beautiful use of the material as Manet and Whistler."

Very celebrated landscapes and seascapes in oil are *The Ocean*, a symphony in gray and green; the Valparaiso picture in blue and gold; the *Sun Cloud*, the *Blue Wave*, *Biarritz*, and the *Angry Sea*, which in their poetic renderings of atmospheric effects, especially of night effects, are by many critics considered almost unrivalled.

Great as was Whistler's skill in the use of oil colours, he achieved equal success in water-colour, a medium which lends itself with peculiar felicity to his dreamy, ethereal creations. In 1884 he exhibited, with a few oils and pastels, a number of very characteristic water-colour drawings amongst which were especially admired

the *Petit Déjeuner*, a note in opal; the *Little Grocery, Chelsea*, in gray and red; *Shelling Peas*, a note in pink; *Amsterdam in Winter*, a nocturne in black and gold; *An Old Shop, Chelsea*, a harmony in pink and gray; and *Tea*, a harmony in violet and amber; all daintily rendered impressions of fleeting effects, fully illustrating the propositions laid down by their author in "L'Envoie" of his catalogue: "a picture is finished when all trace of the means used to bring about the end has disappeared. Industry in Art is a necessity, not a virtue, and any evidence of the same in the production is a blemish, not a quality; a proof not of achievement, but of absolutely insufficient work, for work alone will efface the footsteps of the work."

The same qualities are noticeable in a sketch in gray and gold of *Honfleur Harbour*, described by a writer in the "Art Journal" in 1897 "as a water-colour drawing of the slightest kind, but adequate in harmony of tone and singularly telling at a short distance," making the artist's admirers regret that during the last years of his life water-colour was comparatively neglected by him for other modes of expression. It may be classed with the sketch in oil in brown and gold of *The Curé's little Class, Honfleur*, as an example

of its artist's skill in indicating his subject by a few slight but most effective touches, and making it subordinate to his general scheme of colour. In their turn the water-colours of Whistler may be usefully contrasted with his pastels, especially those of Venetian scenes, *The Shell*, in the possession of Mr. MacIntyre, and the two studies of *The Great Sea*, one in gold and orange, the other in purple and gold, that were shown at the International Society's Exhibition in 1901.

2. PORTRAITS IN OIL.

In an able, but perhaps somewhat overstrained, comparison between Whistler and Manet, Mr. D. S. MacColl[1] remarks that the former at first ran parallel with and even anticipated the latter, but that in his later work the American artist, whilst still holding as strongly as his French contemporary by "a doctrine of positive truth of values, gave it a different application. Like Corot," further observes this keen critic, "in his sense of key and choice of key, Mr. Whistler is also like him in that he sees by tone rather than by form; it is by second thought and something of an effort that he arrives at the boundaries of

[1] "Nineteenth Century Art," MacLehose, p. 157.

tone spaces. His first drawing is a ghost of tone in loops of fluid pigment . . . he beats out, as did Manet, a large Velazquez-like design for the silhouette of his figures, but . . . is content with the minimum indications within it that will make his tone a coherent structure."

In Whistler's portraits, even more than in his landscapes and subject pictures, the truth of these remarks will be recognized, for no matter how ethereal, or as the artist's adverse critics would say, sketchy, they may be, they never fail to reveal great insight into character, combined with a complete subjugation of cause to effect. Of all the charges brought against the great master of tone, that of giving undue prominence to his medium, has never yet been included, for all suggestion of the substance employed is eliminated, and everything unessential is subordinated to expression.

It is a noteworthy fact that few even of the most gifted artists have been able truly to interpret their own characters, and the greater number of portraits of themselves by celebrated masters are revelations, not so much of their real personality, as of that they would fain have the world accept as real. That Whistler should have succeeded where other men of such undoubted

genius have failed, is one of the most remarkable facts of his remarkable career, and is a proof of his truthful estimate of himself in spite of what often appeared an exaggerated sense of his own importance.

Whistler's most remarkable Portrait of himself is fully noticed amongst "Our Illustrations," and others of great excellence are the sketch in the possession of Mr. Avery of New York, and that in the painting of *The Artist's Studio* in the possession of Mr. Douglas Freshfield. In the latter, the master has represented himself at work, standing with his back to two girls, one in Japanese, the other in a fashionable English, costume, who have probably been posing for him. Slight in execution, simple in composition and delicate in colouring, this scene from the artist's studio-life is very characteristic of the freshness, *naïveté* and feeling for Japanese art, so characteristic of much from his hand. It is decorative rather than pictorial, and illustrates well its author's theory "that the space to be covered in a work of Art should always be in proper relation to the means used for covering it," and that "to say of a picture that it shows great and earnest labour is equivalent to pronouncing it incomplete and unfit for view."

With the *Portrait of Himself as a Young Man* may be ranked that of Miss Alexander, which, in the opinion of many critics, has never since been excelled. A sketch for this famous picture, reproduced in the "Art Journal" for October, 1897, is an interesting illustration of the rapidity with which its author was able to seize the salient characteristics of his sitters, and the completed portrait is a peculiarly happy example of his power of combining decorative with pictorial effect.

To pass from this portrait of a light-hearted child with a happy future before her, to that of Whistler's Mother, further described below, in which the artist has expressed, in a manner rarely excelled, the pathos of the retrospect in which the old are so often absorbed, and the beauty of the filial relationship, is to realize that Whistler was indeed a magician of the brush.

Other very celebrated portraits in oil are those of *Thomas Carlyle* and *Miss Rosa Corder*, both amongst our illustrations, *Lady Archibald Campbell*, *Lady Meux*, the *Lady in a Fur Jacket*, the violinist *Sarasate*, the French critic *Théodore Duret*, *Mr. Irving as Philip II.*, and *The Little Cardinal.*

Lady Archibald Campbell is represented in



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PORTRAIT OF THOMAS CARLYLE.

profile, a tall and stately figure in gray, looking backwards over her shoulder as she moves away from the spectator, her whole appearance and attitude expressive of high breeding and refinement. The dark background, throwing her slender form into relief, is slightly touched with gray, harmonizing well with the tones of the flowing robes, and the impression left by the picture is one of the utmost refinement and delicacy.

The *Lady Meux* reveals a character very different from that of the *Lady Archibald Campbell*, though the originals of both belong to the same social status. The painting of the dress and the large shady hat in the latter is specially felicitous, alike luminous and harmonious in colour, setting off admirably the beautiful and thoughtful features of the wearer, who looks out at the spectator as if just about to speak.

The *Lady in the Fur Jacket*, an arrangement in black and brown, resembles the *Lady Meux* in general scheme of colour and composition, but the result is in this case far less satisfactory. It is, no doubt, excelled by the equally famous Portrait of Sarasate, in which Whistler caught and fixed with rare felicity a passing phase of expression, when the great violinist was just about to commence one of his remarkable musical interpreta-

tions. In spite of the conventional evening dress, the sombre black relieved only by the white shirt and tie, the *Sarasate* impresses the spectator as an interpretation of a man of genius by a kindred spirit. The nervous, sensitive hands are rendered with extraordinary skill, and the whole pose is full of vibrant expression.

In the *Théodore Duret* the artist has succeeded in interpreting with equal success a very different personality from that of the musician. The well-known critic, bright, vivacious, and full of verve, but without the divine spark of genius that sets Sarasate apart from his fellows, is evidently about to start for a ball, and the sombreness of his correctly fashionable attire is relieved by a red fan held in one gloved hand, and a copious rose-coloured domino hanging from his arm in voluminous folds.

In marked contrast with the various portraits hitherto described, in all of which the changes are rung on white, black or brown, is the beautiful study of a child in garnet and gold, known as *The Little Cardinal*, which was one of the gems of the Winter Exhibition of Portraits at the New Gallery in 1902. A remarkable example of Whistler's peculiar excellences, especially his extraordinary skill in suggestion, this portrait of

a boy of some ten years old, is an exquisite harmony of colour, and has about it a nameless charm, which haunts those who have once seen it. This charm none of its defects—for defects it undoubtedly has, notably, for instance, the faulty drawing of the mouth—can destroy, and even when brought into direct contrast with the work of such successful interpreters of child-life as Shannon and Sargent, it was able to hold its own.

Very interesting also are the Portraits of the *Master Smith* and *Little Rose*, both of Lyme Regis, and the *Little Blue Bonnet*; the two first-named now in the Art Museum of Boston, Massachusetts, the other in private possession in England.

The Master Smith differs in a marked degree from such delicately painted, ethereal productions as *The Little White Girl*, or *The Little Cardinal*, and even from the Portraits of Carlyle and of Sarasate; but this is the result rather of difference between the models than of any real change in the artist's mode of work. It is evidently an admirable likeness of an actual blacksmith, with all the sturdy independence peculiar to the Anglo-Saxon peasant. The vigorous strokes by the master's brush on the canvas

seem to echo those of the original of the picture on his anvil, for manner and matter are, as was usual with Whistler, thoroughly in accord. The *Master Smith* has been likened to the "Tailor" of Moroni in the National Gallery, but although there is certainly some resemblance in the virile force of handling, and the strength of visual expression, the comparison cannot be carried further, for the exquisitely painted hands of Moroni's "Tailor" are as eloquent of meaning as his features, whereas those of Whistler's *Smith* are sketchy in the extreme.

The delicate beauty of the *Little Rose* is rendered with the same masterly skill as is the manly vigour of the *Master Smith*, who may possibly have been her father. Her star-like eyes gaze out of the picture with a delightful expression of child-like innocence, and the details of the simple village costume are admirably rendered. Just as *The Little Cardinal* remains an undying type of aristocratic boyhood, so does the *Little Rose* of rustic maidenhood, and together they would prove, if proof were needed, that their author was the owner of the poet-nature, of which insight into childhood is one of the most noteworthy characteristics.

Although comparatively artificial in her ela-

borately trimmed bodice and with her carefully arranged coiffure, the *Little Blue Bonnet* is a very charming picture, an excellent presentment of a happily dowered girl, accustomed to have her every whim considered, and *La Petit Souris*, a study in gray and silver, is an equally successful interpretation of a more mature maiden, tenderly holding the little mouse, which gives its name to the picture, against a mass of delicately painted chiffon.

3. WHISTLER AS AN ETCHER

Whatever may still be the difference of opinion as to Whistler's rank as a painter, there no longer remains any doubt, in the minds of those competent to judge, of his pre-eminence as an etcher, worthy to tread in the footsteps of such great masters of the past as Albrecht Dürer and Rembrandt, and to rank with such gifted modern wielders of the etching needle as Sir Seymour Haden, Alphonse Legros, Paul Helleu, and Charles Méryon.

As was triumphantly proved by Rembrandt many centuries ago, etching is peculiarly fitted for the expression of an artist's idiosyncrasies, and, as is well pointed out by Mr. Alfred Whitman

in his "Print-Collector's Handbook," it promotes direct communication between him and the connoisseur, bringing the two, as it were, face to face.

This is also very noticeably the case with the work of the modern masters mentioned above, especially with that of Sir Seymour Haden, Charles Méryon, and Whistler, all of whom shared with their great predecessor the power of catching with absolute faithfulness, the subtle, delicate individual aroma of every subject they chose, in spite of the absolute necessity of submitting, to what in less skilful hands, would be the hampering conditions of etching, in which every stroke must be final, and there can be no going back from the original intention.

It seems strange that an artist, whose paintings are as remarkable for the absence of definition as are those of Whistler, should have taken so great a delight and achieved so undeniable a success, with a medium necessitating such rigid adherence to line, and that he should have been able to invest his etchings with so much of the dreamy sentiment distinguishing his Harmonies and Symphonies in colour.

The Thames etchings, of which perhaps the best known are the *Thames Police*, the *Black Lion*



BLACK LION WHARF, WAPPING.

FROM AN ETCHING.

Wharf, *Old Hungerford Bridge*, and *St. James Street*, take rank amongst the very best work of the kind ever produced. They have, moreover, an historic as well as an aesthetic value, on account of the many and great changes which have been brought about in London since they were produced. The construction of the Embankment especially, which, although it was undoubtedly needed, and is in its turn gradually putting on the charm that comes of wear and tear, necessarily improved away many quaint bits of the river side, with its decaying wharves, quaint old barges and stretches of insanitary, but from the art point of view, most picturesque mud.

The beautiful London etchings are equalled, if not excelled, by those executed in Venice, where Whistler succeeded in catching, with something of the sympathetic insight of Turner, the characteristic quality of the lagoon atmosphere, so different from that of the Thames, and in interpreting with a felicity rarely if ever surpassed, the salient features of the Queen of the Adriatic. With his magic needle he accenuated anew the stately charm of dome, campanile, palazzo, façade, and bridge; the graceful form of the high-born Italian maiden, and the supple ease of the skilful gondolier. He penetrated into the

little known byways of the heart of the town, noting with keen appreciation every type of character, touching off with a few bold strokes the fishwife in her shop, the bead-stringer in the factory, the glass-blower at the furnace, the dyer at the vat, the lobster fisher at his pots, and the beggar in his most unguarded moments.

Equal in delicate charm and individual character to the Venetian etchings are those of Loches, Bourges, Beaulieu, and other quaint old towns of Lorraine; whilst the plates, executed in Holland and Belgium, such as the *Zaandam*, *The Balcony*, *Amsterdam*, and the *Grande Place*, *Brussels*, if not perhaps quite so fascinating as some of the earlier work, so far as sentiment is concerned, show an ever increasing mastery of technique. Very interesting also are the many figure subjects, strictly so-called, which were treated by Whistler in etching, such as the early Portrait of Riault, the engraver, signed for once with the artist's full name, instead of only with his butterfly, that of Auguste Delâtre, and the so-called "Cameo No. 1," of which there is a good reproduction in the Summer Number of the "Studio" for 1902, representing a young mother gazing in rapt admiration at her sleeping child, which has something of the sentiment of Eugène

Carrière, that most faithful of all modern interpreters of the pathos of motherhood.

3. WHISTLER'S LITHOGRAPHS

In spite of the great triumphs achieved with the aid of lithography in the early part of the nineteenth century by Delacroix, and, later, by Raffet, Daumier and Gavarni, the art, as an original means of expression, had fallen into almost complete disuse before its revival, by Whistler, about 1870.

As already stated, Mr. Thomas Way first called the attention of Whistler to the possibilities of the long neglected medium, and the impressionist master at once proceeded, with characteristic enthusiasm, to make the new mode of expression peculiarly his own. In 1878 and 1879 he worked very steadily at lithography, publishing several fine examples of his skill, such as *The Toilet* and the *Limehouse*, with some early morning effects and nocturnes, in which he followed the old-fashioned method of drawing direct upon the stone. In 1885, however, he relinquished it, to turn to account the newly developed processes, in which the use of transfer paper is an important factor, rendering it

possible to work out of doors, and to catch on the spot the most fleeting effects of atmosphere or of grouping. In whatever manner they were produced, and whether the lithographic chalk, the point, or what is known as the stump, was his tool, the results obtained were equally happy, for one and all of Whistler's lithographs bear the unmistakable impress of his genius.

"In the *Canal Vitré*," said Mr. T. R. Way in an article in the "Studio" for January, 1896, "Mr. Whistler uses the stump for the first time, and produces by its means the exquisite liquidity of the wate and the delicate cloudy sky." "Stumping," explained Mr. Way, has been in use nearly as long as lithography itself, being always a favourite process with French artists; but its application by Whistler to his drawings is on quite individual and distinct lines, as illustrated by the Luxembourg series, notably in *The Steps*, with its dainty ascending figures and groups at the top, and the dark *Dome of the Pantheon*, seen from the terrace on which are the familiar nursemaids and children. The celebrated *Balconies*, both executed on the day of President Carnot's funeral, but, in spite of the gloomy occasion, full of life and brightness, the effects of sunlight being peculiarly happy, are

on the other hand, drawn with the point, and illustrate well Whistler's power of indicating crowds with a few effective touches, whilst in the *Rue Fürstenburg* Mr. Way recognizes a fresh development, the drawing, he explains, being free from the mechanical texture to be found in the preceding lithographs, whilst the treatment of the scene differs from that in the *Balconies*, and is peculiarly suitable to the subject, typical as it is of the older quarters of Paris. *La Belle Dame Paresseuse* and *The Duet* are, in the opinion of this able critic, revelations of yet another development of the master's art, the latter, a night effect, he considers worthy of Rembrandt in his own peculiar line; whilst *The Smith* and *The Forge* of the *Place du Dragon* mark a further change, and should be considered as actual drawings on stone.

Equally interesting and characteristic are *The Conversation*, in which a scene of Parisian open air life is caught with all its sparkle and colour; the *Confidences dans le Jardin*; the numerous street scenes at Lyme Regis; *The Long Gallery of the Louvre*; and above all, the later London scenes, amongst which may be specially noted the beautiful *River from the Savoy*.

Very successful also in their faithful interpreta-

tion of fleeting phases of expression and momentary gesture, are many of what may be called the more strictly defined figure subjects, some of which rival even *The Little Nude Model reading* in pathetic charm. The Mother, seated on a sofa, lovingly clasping her girl baby; the Mother gazing at her sleeping infant, are both eloquent of maternal devotion; the little *Evelyn* is an admirable presentment of an English child, whilst *The Winged Hat*, the *Jolie New Yorkaise*, the *Robe Rouge*, and the *Gants de Suède* are happy interpretations of well-known models who, though they may possibly be frivolous, are yet full of charm. The fine portrait of his brother, Dr. Whistler, a keen man of science, with that of the French poet, Stéphane Mallarmé, a man of a very different type, prove that their artist might, if he would, rival his paintings of *Sarasate* and *Théodore Duret* with his black and white interpretations of men of genius. Even when Whistler on rare occasions essayed the use of colour in lithography, as in his celebrated *Yellow House*, *Guingamp*, and *Red House*, *Paimpol*, he triumphed successfully over all difficulties, and it would indeed require an expert to detect any sign of the amount of labour which must have been involved in their production.

4. THE PEACOCK ROOM AND OTHER DECORATIVE WORK

In his work as a decorative artist Whistler had an excellent opportunity of vindicating his much-contested theory that the expression of emotion is out of place in Art—arrangement, form and harmonies of colour being all with which the master need concern himself. In decoration pure and simple, if in any branch of art production, the elimination of sentiment and association would appear to be justified; yet, strange to say, in his most celebrated scheme of that description—the so-called "Peacock Room" in No. 49, Prince's Gate, which formerly belonged to Mr. Leyland—Whistler gave close attention to form, and caught the very sentiment of the highest form of Japanese art. The beautiful *La Princesse du Pays de la Porcelaine*, of which the Peacock Room was once the setting, is universally acknowledged to be one of its author's best portraits; admirably fitted for the position it originally occupied, but at the same time so true a masterpiece as to be quite independent of any adventitious surroundings.

The artist himself characterized this painting as a "Harmony in Rose and Silver," but it is

more than that, for though rose and silver are the dominant hues, they are by no means the only notes making up the Harmony. It is a proof of the thoroughness with which its creator had mastered the lesson he tried to teach to others: "how grace should be wedded to dignity, and how strength enhances sweetness." The noble figure of the *Princesse*, in her graceful Oriental robes, stands out against a delicately painted screen; the pale, refined features are set off by masses of dark hair; the rosy lips, parted as if about to speak; the fan held in one hand, the rug on which she stands, every detail, in fact, enhancing the charm.

The Peacock Room was in the first place hung with Spanish leather, but Mr. Leyland having bought *La Princesse du Pays de la Porcelaine*, was anxious that it should be seen to the best advantage in his house, and it is said that he asked the master to inspect its surroundings. Whistler is reported to have pointed out that the red and gold of the Spanish leather were out of harmony with his painting and destroyed its effect. He professed his readiness to paint out the red flowers on the wall, and Mr. Leyland gladly consented. The artist set to work, but his enthusiasm growing as he went on, he gradually

completely transformed the original decoration; the Spanish leather, which had cost no less than a thousand pounds, disappearing altogether to give place to a marvellous scheme in blue and gold, of which peacocks and their feathers were the leading motive.

Although not so celebrated as the "Peacock Room" at Queen's Gate, the Music Room of Signor Pablo Sarasate, in Paris, is a very fine example of Whistler's decorative ability. The harmonious compositions covering its walls are all in white, pink, and pale yellow, and the furniture in the same colours was specially designed for it. Several mansions in London were also decorated by or under the superintendence of the American master; but his fame in that direction has been quite eclipsed by his triumphs of other kinds. It will no doubt be as an impressionist portrait painter and a new interpreter of fleeting atmospheric effects, especially those of the night, that his name will go down to posterity.

OUR ILLUSTRATIONS

I. THE PORTRAIT OF WHISTLER AS A YOUNG MAN

THIS remarkable work of art, now in the possession of Mr. George McCulloch, is well known from the admirable etching after it by William Hole. It is an acknowledged masterpiece, and will ever remain an incontrovertible witness to its author's insight into his own character, as well as a justification of his constantly reiterated dictum that "the work of a master recks not of the sweat of the brow, suggests no effort, and is finished from its beginning—perfect in its bud as in its bloom, with no reason to explain its presence, no mission to fulfil." Gazing straight out at the spectator, the artist would appear, not as must really have been the case, to be looking at his own image in the glass, but to be pausing for a moment in his work to greet some intrusive yet welcome friend. The strong effect of individuality and truthful-

ness is produced without the aid of any extraneous detail whatever, for the costume, picturesque though it is, is such as might be worn by any working artist in his studio, and the sole adornment of the background is the butterfly signature, which had, as yet, none of the aggressively suggestive character it assumed in its later developments.

The portrait is a revelation of the inner *ego* of a young genius still unspoiled by flattery or soured by hostile criticism, and to Whistler himself the pleasure of looking at it must surely often have been dashed with pain at the thought of the inevitable change which, as years went by, came over his genial, happy, contented way of looking at life. Contrasting it with other likenesses of the master, its superior beauty of expression cannot fail to strike the observer. When it was produced, all things still seemed possible to its subject, and the many disappointments and disillusions, the long physical suffering which preceded the end, were still hidden in the book of fate. To everyone it is more or less sad to look at a true presentment of his or her young self—it must have been exceptionally so to the man who, to quote his own words at the dinner already referred to, given to him in 1880, "had

had to wrap himself in a species of misunderstanding as the traveller of the fable drew closer about him the folds of his cloak, the more bitterly the storm assailed him on the way." Skilful in hiding his true feelings, and unable to resist the temptation of making a witty repartee even when it was likely to alienate a friend, and cause the little rift within the lute which often ended in life-long estrangement, it was indeed rare for Whistler, to use his own expression again, "to disclose his deep emotion." That he had, nevertheless, the power of binding with strong ties of affection the few whom he admitted to his intimacy, is proved by the many generous tributes of his fellow artists to his memory that have appeared since his death. Writers in "The Studio," "The Magazine of Art," "The Art Journal," and other serial publications, have given many delightful glimpses of Whistler as a child, when he was the sturdy protector and idolized companion of his mother; of his light-hearted student days in Paris, when his wild pranks were the talk of the atéliers, and of the golden time of his prime, when he gloried in opposition, and also, alas, of the sad years of his decline, when he became a mere shadow of his former self. The most striking utterance was,

however, perhaps, that of Mr. John Lavery, R.S.A., Vice-President of the International Society at the meeting of December 15th, 1903, for the election of his successor, M. Rodin. "We have lost our President, and I have no words with which to express that irreparable loss, not only to the Society, but to the world of art at large. Of the artist we all know the monument he has raised to himself in the masterpieces he has left us . . . of him as a friend I speak feelingly, because I knew him intimately for many years. His old-world courtesy and kindly consideration were little understood but by those with whom he was in sympathy. In all my dealings with him as President I found him full of the kindliest courtesy. . . . I can testify to the gap caused by the loss of his strong personality and great intelligence."

2. THE PORTRAIT OF WHISTLER'S MOTHER

In this beautiful work, that ranks amongst the most celebrated portraits of modern times, the master undoubtedly touched his highest point of excellence, and it is difficult to believe that in 1872 it only escaped rejection at the Royal Academy through the intervention of Sir William Boxall, who, when the jury had declined to hang

it, protested so vigorously as to compel them to reconsider their decision. Exhibited some years later at the Salon, where it was accorded a place of honour, it was bought by the French Government, and now hangs in the Luxembourg, whence it will no doubt, now that its author has passed away, soon be removed to the Louvre.

Although Whistler himself called this beautiful picture "An Arrangement in Gray and Black," protesting that the original having been his own mother was no concern of the public, the fact of the relationship between artist and sitter does, of course, add very much to the interest of the work, and was, indeed, really a protest by the master against the cynical character he was so fond of assuming.

Represented in profile, her face wearing the dreamy expression natural to those who live rather in the past than in the present, and with her hands folded on her lap, Mrs. Whistler is evidently quite oblivious of the fact that she is posing, quite forgetful of the presence of her son. A true harmony in gray and black, a poem of which the keynote is subdued melancholy, this Portrait is one of the few pictures which, once seen, cannot be forgotten; it haunts the memory like the refrain of some favourite song

In handling and colour the *Mother's Portrait* resembles rather the later *Carlyle* than the earlier *Miss Alexander*, or the *Portrait of the Artist* himself; the treatment, apparently simple, is admirably suited to the subject, not a touch is wasted and there is no trace of the amount of work which was really expended upon it.

That a painting of such great beauty and charm should have been bought by any but the English government is indeed greatly to be regretted, and the only excuse that can be found for the National Trustees is that it was never considered possible that the artist would be disposed to sell it, for, as is well known, Whistler was deeply attached to his mother, and her influence was always a dominant feature in his life.

3. THE PORTRAIT OF THOMAS CARLYLE

Though not perhaps quite so popular or remarkable a success as that of Mrs. Whistler, the *Portrait of Thomas Carlyle* is a very typical example of its artist's peculiar methods and proves that he did not neglect his opportunities for studying the character of the celebrated sage when they were near neighbours at Chelsea. Not unlike each other in certain peculiarities of

disposition, writer and painter appear to have been very thoroughly *en rapport*, and not one of the various portraits of Carlyle gives quite so true a rendering of his idiosyncrasies as does this severely simple presentment of a melancholy old man, who has tried all things and discovered their vanity. Represented in profile against a gray wall, the stern, intolerant and uncompromising, yet withal patient and humble Scotch author, would seem to be passing in sad review the results of his life-work. His whole attitude expresses weariness and disillusion; the noble head drooping slightly on to the left shoulder, the neglected hair and beard expressive of total indifference to his own personal appearance; the heavy black clothes and large black hat, serving to intensify the corpse-like pallor of the features; whilst the black wainscoting of the room in which he sits and the black frames of the pictures on the walls, add yet more to the general gloom of the painting.

Exhibited first at the Grosvenor Gallery in 1877, and at the Salon in 1884, this remarkable Portrait was eventually bought by the Corporation of Glasgow, an action very severely criticised by the ratepayers of that city.

In spite of the strictures of a few grumblers,

who were unable to recognize either the beauty of the painting or the just distinction of the man it represents, the *Carlyle* is justly looked upon by the people of Glasgow as one of their most valuable civic possessions; it is a true interpretation of a typical Scotsman; a good illustration of Whistler's power of merging all thought of self in his subject; a complete refutation of the assertion made by certain of his critics, that his portraits are reflections of the mood he happened to be in when he painted them, as well as of his own reiterated assertion that Art has nothing to do with the emotions.

The portrait of Carlyle was exhibited at the Goupil Gallery before it went to Scotland, and, says Mr. Croal Thomson, who had arranged for it to be shown, writing in the "Art Journal" for September, 1903, "many who had come to scoff and smile, when they found the Chelsea philosopher so grandly portrayed, remained to admire." It formed, in fact, a kind of turning-point in Whistler's career, its purchase by the Glasgow authorities having been the first recognition by a corporate body of the value of the master's work.

4. THE PORTRAIT OF MISS ROSA CORDER

One of the most popular works of its gifted author, this Portrait is as characteristic of his peculiar excellences as are the portraits of Mrs. Whistler and Carlyle. It is more than a mere likeness of a single individual, it is a subtle psychological study of a typical intellectual woman of modern times. Painted in profile, the noble figure and severely classical features, the masses of blonde hair contrasting with the delicate yet healthy pallor of the complexion, stand out against a background admirably fitted to enhance their charm. The black costume and black hat, relieved by but a few touches of white, are rendered with consummate skill, and the whole composition breathes forth the very essence of a personality of rare charm—a charm of which its happy possessor is quite unconscious.

The *Portrait of Miss Corder*, now in private possession in America, was first exhibited at the Grosvenor Gallery in 1879, where it was greatly admired by all who were really competent to judge, certain critics going so far as to compare it with the best work of Velazquez. The rapidity of the handling, the subtle differences in the various textures of the costume, and the



PORTRAIT OF MISS ROSA CORDER.

extreme delicacy of the flesh tints are specially remarkable. The Portrait may be usefully compared with that of the less well-known *Lady in a Fur Jacket*, belonging to Mr. William Burrell, of Glasgow, representing a personality very different from that of the evidently strong-minded Miss Corder, who was herself a successful painter.

5. AT THE PIANO

The first picture exhibited by Whistler at the Royal Academy, where it was hung in 1860, this remarkable composition is now the property of Mr. Edmund Davis. It represents Lady Seymour Haden, the sister of the painter, and her daughter, who often posed for her uncle, to whom she was greatly attached. The picture is a very marked contrast to the Symphonies in White described above, and though it is now generally recognized to be a masterpiece, it has been very variously criticised, one writer accusing the artist of "painting in soot and mud colours," whilst another saw in it "a proof of his divine eye for colour, his relentless grasp of personal character," and yet another considered it "worthy to rank with a Gainsborough, a Van Dyck, or even a Rembrandt." The composition is of the simplest, and to some the figure of the

child might appear to be a little too much cut out, the white dress in too strong contrast with the dark brown wood of the instrument, whilst the mutilated pictures on the walls are anything but pleasing to the eye. Yet it is of this painting that a critic, writing in 1902, says: "The charm of the picture lies in the masterly simplicity of the lines of the piano, and the pictures on the wall, as contrasted with the flowing lines of the two opposing figures—the mother, gravely seated at the piano, and the little girl absorbed in her listening. The child's figure in a gauzy white dress . . . looking intently towards the player, has been held to be one of the most perfect creations of modern art. It is but a portrait, and yet it conjures up all that is finest in a young girl."

The one note of strong colour in this much discussed painting is the deep red of the carpet, that does much to relieve what would perhaps otherwise be the over sombreness of the composition.

6. SYMPHONY IN WHITE, NO. 3

This most charming composition, exhibited at the Academy in 1867, is now the property of Mr. Edward Davis. It is justly considered one of its

author's masterpieces. Exquisite in grouping, a perfect poem of tender colouring, it is perhaps surpassed by the Symphony in White No. 2 alone. The figures of the young girls are set off by their cream-coloured dresses, their attitudes are graceful and natural. The russet gold of their hair, the suggestion of blue in the matting on the floor, the red fan, the green leaves and purple flowers, give just the touches of colour needed to relieve what might otherwise have appeared too lavish a use of white. Of this picture Mr. Hamerton, who when it was exhibited ranked high amongst contemporary critics, remarked that it was not precisely a symphony in white, *à propos* of which Whistler is reported to have said, "*Bon Dieu!* does this wise person expect white hair and chalked faces?" Like *The Balcony*, which is almost as famous as the No. 3 Symphony, it very plainly reveals its author's strong sympathy with Japanese art. He has not loaded his canvas with any unnecessary details; simplicity and decorative feeling are the most salient characteristics of what is a true poem in paint.

7. THE THAMES IN ICE

Exhibited at the Academy in 1862,—when it bore the title of *The Twenty-fifth of December*,

1860, *on the Thames*,—and now in private possession in America, this fine interpretation of a characteristic London scene, is of special interest as one of the earliest of the master's paintings produced before his peculiar style was fully evolved. It contains a good deal more detail than Whistler introduced in his later work, and the brushwork is simpler. It ranks rather with the *Last of Old Westminster* and the *Chelsea in Ice* than with the dreamy, ethereal conceptions that were later its author's delight, and won for him a place among such true poet-painters as Turner and Corot, justifying his own claim to have been one of the few to whom Nature "Sings her exquisite song and unfolds her secrets revealed to the artist alone, her son and master: her son, in that he loves her ; her master, in that he knows her."

8. BLACK LION WHARF, FROM AN ETCHING

This fine example of one of the earlier of the famous Thames Etchings, reproduced from that in the Print Room in the British Museum, has a considerable historic as well as artistic value, representing as it does a very typical London scene in 1859, some years before the construction of either of the Embankments which have re-

moved so many old landmarks. As is the case with the paintings from the same hand, there is far more detail in the earlier than in the later etchings, yet in spite of this they are full of poetic feeling, and already display the extraordinary command of the medium which was eventually to raise their author to the highest rank amongst the wielders of the needle. In the "Burlington Magazine" for November, 1903, the *Black Lion Wharf* is printed beneath the famous "Mill" of Rembrandt, and it triumphantly sustains the test of comparison. "The Art of Whistler," says Mr. Joseph Pennell in the article of which these two typical etchings are amongst the illustrations, "was a growth and a definite development, but it was from the first perfect in its own way." Moreover, as the same able critic points out, "Whistler added a new scientific method to the art of etching, that of painting on the copper plate with the needle. "Who before," asks Mr. Pennell, "had ever shown the richness which a copper is capable of yielding without mechanical work, without stupid cross hatching? And yet," he adds, "he never transgressed a single one of the laws the other great etchers and he himself had laid down." As is well known, Whistler long had the collaboration of his fellow

master in etching, the famous Frenchman, Auguste Delâtre; but, as a general rule, he was his own biter-in and printer. Mr. Pennell, who worked with him for some time in Paris, elo quently describes an afternoon of biting-in in th garden of the house in the Rue du Bac, declaring that the master's methods, like his etching tools, were all his own. He even puts forth the claim, which may or may not be endorsed, that Whistler was in advance even of Rembrandt in certain respects: "The older master," he says, "is conservative and mannered, the modern master, respecting all the great art of the past, is gracious, sensitive, perfectly free."



[*By permission of Mr. Edmund Davis.*

SYMPHONY IN WHITE (NO. III).

SOME OF THE PRINCIPAL PAINTINGS OF JAMES McNEILL WHISTLER

WITH THE NAMES OF THEIR OWNERS AS FAR AS CAN BE ASCERTAINED.

Portrait of Miss Alexander. *Mr. Alexander.*
Portrait of the Artist. *Mr. George McCulloch.*
Portrait of Mrs. Whistler. *Luxembourg, Paris.*
Portrait of Thomas Carlyle.
Corporation Art Gallery, Glasgow.
Portrait of Miss Rosa Corder. *Mr. R. Canfield.*
The Fur Jacket. *Mr. William Burrell.*
Portrait of Lady Meux. *Lady Meux.*
Sir Henry Irving as Philip II. *Sir Henry Irving.*
Portrait of Sarasate.
Carnegie Institute, Pittsburg.
Portrait of Master Stevie Manuel.
Mrs. M. B. Manuel.
Portrait of M. Théodore Duret. *M. Duret.*
Portrait of Dr. W. McNeill Whistler.
Mrs. Whistler.
The Master Smith of Lyme Regis.
Boston Museum.

Little Rose of Lyme Regis. *Boston Museum.*
La Princesse du Pays de la Porcelaine
Mr. C. L. Freer.
The Little Cardinal.
La Mère Gérard. *Mr. A. C. Swinburne.*
The White Girl. *Private Possession, America.*
The Little White Girl. *Mr. A. H. Studd.*
The Symphony in White, No. 3.
Mr. Edmund Davis.
The Balcony. *Mr. C. L. Freer.*
Portrait of Lady Archibald Campbell.
Wilstach Museum.
The Philosopher. *Comtesse de Béarn.*
The Golden Screen. *Lord Battersea.*
At the Piano. *Mr. Edmund Davis.*
The Music Room. *Private Possession, America.*
Connie Gilchrist Dancing.
Cremorne Gardens. *Mr. T. R. Way.*
The Thames in Ice. *Mr. C. L. Freer.*
Curé's Little Class, Honfleur. *Mr. J. J. Cowan.*
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